

Some Old Plate in the Collection of the Most Hon. the Marquess of Sligo By E. Alfred Jones, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

THE Marquess of Sligo is the owner of several inherited specimens of Old English and Irish silver of considerable interest, as will be observed from the descriptions and illustrations in this article.

Beginning with the objects in chronological order, the first specimen to claim attention is a rare English spoon with a slit-end, the finial having been broken off (No. i., centre), which is assigned on the evidence of the London mark in the bowl to the reign of Henry IV., about the year 1400, and is thus contemporary with the curious "Maidenhead" spoons. Two examples of the Old English seal-top spoons, which continued in fashion for a century or more from about the year 1560 (in latten and pewter, as well as silver), are represented in the collection. The smaller spoon was wrought by a London goldsmith in 1615-16, and bears the maker's mark of MH conjoined, similar to that on a spoon, 1613, of the Armourers' Company and to one, 1615, at the Holburne Museum, Bath; while the other came from the hands of an unknown provincial craftsman, using as his punch the initials A.A. (No. i., left and right). Several varieties of seal-tops were made for this form of spoon. Illustrated on the same plate (top) is one of the uncommon hash spoons of the time of William III., dated 1700-01, and measuring 12¼ in. long, which has a trifold top, in the manner of table and other contemporary spoons. Francis Archbold, of London, was the maker.

An exceedingly rare, if not unique, object, is the silver-mounted leather wine bottle, surmounted by a well-modelled figure of Neptune (No. ii.). Inscribed above the arms is the

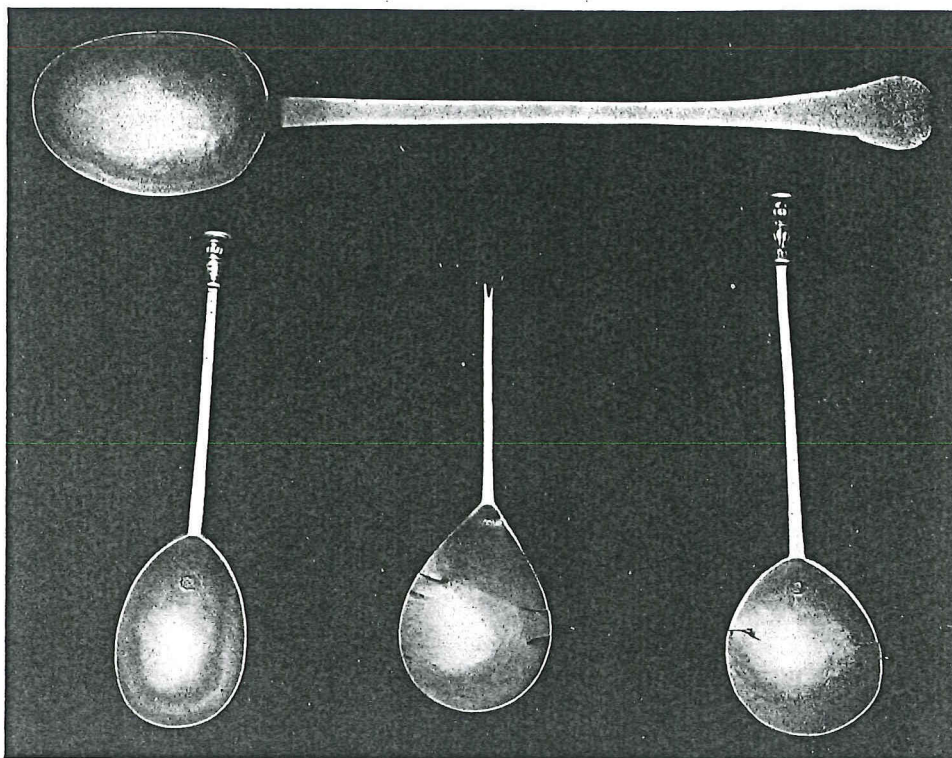
hospitable invitation, HELPE VOVRE SELFE, and below the arms is the following puzzling inscription

DAVIDE OGELVIE, NOVA SCOTIAE : 1644
TO ALEXANDER IRWINE OF SVTHERLAND

On the silver rim along the base of the bottle is engraved a somewhat mutilated version of Virgil, Aeneid VI.; 853, PARECERE [PARCERE] SVBJECTIS DEBELLARE SVPERBOS, with an additional quotation, PATRIIS VIRTVTIBVS, which appears to have been derived from Cicero (pro Sestio XXI., 48), *Patria virtute praeditus filius* (To spare the humble and make war upon the proud, with the courage of their forefathers). The arms seem to be those of Lord Ogilvy of Banff: Quarterly—1 and 4, *argent a lion passant guardant gules crowned or*, for Ogilvie; 2 and 3, *argent three papingoes vert beaked and membered gules*, for Earl of Home and Pepdie of Dunglas or Dungalass. Crest—*A lion's head erased gules*. Supporters—Dexter, *a man in armour with a target*; sinister—*a lion rampant gules*. Motto—*Fideliter*. The shield is surmounted by a baron's coronet. The above tinctures are absent, as it was not customary at this date to engrave tinctures in arms on plate. The inscription of donation has been described as puzzling for the reason that by some extraordinary mistake the engraver would seem to have engraved the name *David* instead of *George*, no baronet bearing the name of David Ogilvie (or Ogilvy) having been traced. The donor appears to have been George Ogilvy, of Banff and Dunlugh, son and heir of Sir Walter Ogilvy, who was created a baronet in 1627, and raised to the peerage of Scotland by the title of Baron Ogilvy of Banff in 1642 by Charles I. for his distinguished

No. II.—SILVER-MOUNTED
 LEATHER WINE BOTTLE
 SURMOUNTED BY A
 FIGURE OF NEPTUNE,
 AND INSCRIBED :
 “DAVIDE OGELVIE, NOVA
 SCOTIAE : 1644 / TO
 ALEXANDER IRWINE
 OF SVTHERLAND” ;
 AND A SILVER-MOUNTED
 BLACK JACK, BEARING
 THE INVERNESS MARK,
 AND DATING FROM THE
 SECOND HALF OF THE
 SEVENTEENTH CENTURY





No. I.—ENGLISH SPOONS CENTRE: LONDON, CIRCA 1400 --- LEFT: LONDON, BY MH, 1615-16
 RIGHT: BY AA, EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TOP: LONDON, F. ARCHBOLD, 1700-01



No. III.—LEFT: SILVER-MOUNTED COCOA-NUT CUP, 1582-83 RIGHT: ANOTHER, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
 CENTRE: CUP, BY HENRY PENSTONE, 1691-92

The Connoisseur



No. IV.—LEFT:
CAUDLE CUP, 1684-85
RIGHT: ANOTHER,
1673-74 CENTRE:
PUNCH BOWL,
DUBLIN, 1734

conduct against the Covenanters on June 19th, 1639, at the Bridge of Dee. In revenge for the part he had taken against them, his fine house and gardens at Banff were destroyed by the Covenanting army. He married (1) Margaret, daughter of Sir Alexander Irvine, of Drum; and (2) Janet*, daughter of William Sutherland, of Duffus, who in 1629 complained to the Privy Council of his cruelty to her and her children. Lord Banff died on August 11th, 1663 (G.E.C., *Peerage*). Another curious fact in the inscription is the omission of the donor's full title as a peer (though a baron's coronet is engraved), conferred upon him two years before the date of the gift. Although no maker's or other marks are visible on the silver mountings of this curious and interesting old bottle, the mountings themselves were most probably wrought at, or shortly before, the date of the gift, 1644. Many allusions to the leather bottle may be found in Old English ballads and other writings. Shakespeare mentions it in *Henry VI.*, ii., 5; and an old broadside is entitled *A Song in Praise of the Leather Bottle*.

A second silver-mounted leather vessel, called a "black jack," bearing the Inverness mark, and dating from the second half of the seventeenth century, is also shewn in the same illustration (No. ii.). Drinking vessels of leather and silver

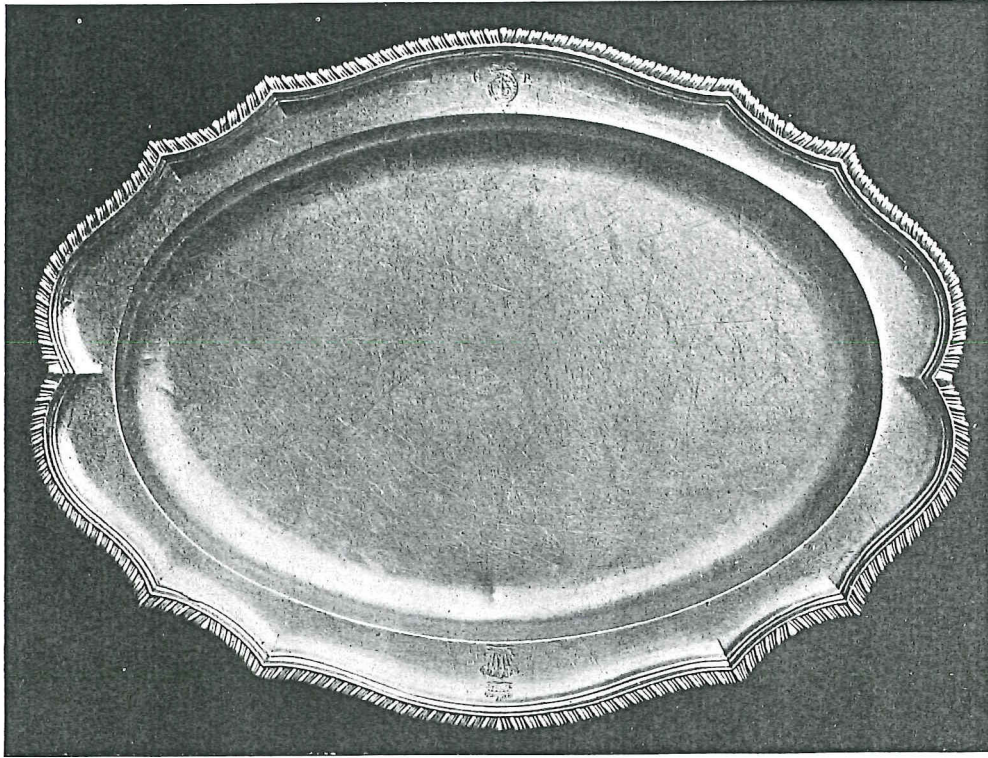
in this form were not uncommon in England at this period, and recall the "small jacks we have in many ale-houses tipped with silver, besides the great jacks and bombards of the Court," mentioned by Heywood in 1635 (*Philocothonista*).

Two silver-mounted cocoa-nut cups next deserve notice. One is hall-marked for the year 1582-83 on the rim (No. iii., left). The baluster stem and splayed base are of a form common on silver wine cups of Charles I., the Commonwealth, and Charles II. The other cup is not hall-marked, and therefore the precise date cannot be ascertained, though it may be ascribed to the seventeenth century. Cocoa nuts were regarded as such curiosities in England in mediæval times as to be mounted as cups in precious metal. The taste for drinking vessels formed of these nuts, decorated with elaborate silver mountings characteristic of goldsmiths' handiwork of the period, prevailed in England throughout the reign of Elizabeth. An unaccountable revival of cups formed of cocoa-nut occurred a few years after the accession of George III., and was continued until the early years of the nineteenth century.

The silver single-handled cup, $3\frac{7}{8}$ in. high, illustrated with these two cocoa nut cups was made in London in 1691-92, probably by Henry Penstone, and is chased and engraved in the pseudo-Chinese taste inspired by the Chinese porcelain imported in the luxurious reign of Charles II., and adopted

* Burke says "Mary."

Some Old Plate



No. V.—MEAT DISH, BY THOMAS HEMING, 1779

as a novel mode of decoration for plate by London goldsmiths about 1670. This craze, as it may be aptly called, was especially persistent during the decade 1680-1690, and declined rapidly until about 1695, when it passed away, to be revived in a different manner (chased and embossed) on silver plate in the eighteenth century under the influence of the "Chinese" style of Chippendale furniture.

Plate of the second half of the seventeenth century is represented by one of the familiar caudle cups, introduced towards the close of the Commonwealth, embossed with tulips and other blossoms and dated 1673-74; and by another caudle cup dated 1684-85—the last year of the reign of Charles II.—of a different shape, fluted in a similar manner to the rare old Irish punch bowl, illustrated in the centre of the same group (No. iv.). This bowl came from the workshop of an unknown Dublin goldsmith and was wrought in 1734. It is $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. high.

The last illustration in this, the first part of the article on Lord Sligo's plate, is that of a large plain meat dish with a gadrooned border,

measuring 17 in. long, and $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, and engraved with the Royal Arms and cipher of George III., and with the crest and a Viscount's coronet of Richard, Earl Howe (1726-99). It was made in 1779 by the royal goldsmith, Thomas Heming, the maker of a large number of silver candlesticks which the present writer examined some years ago in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg. This dish is part of a service of plate provided for this nobleman, then a Viscount, in December, 1779, upon his appointment as one of the delegates selected on the abortive peace commission to America. Lord Howe died without a male heir; all his plate descended to his two daughters, one of whom married the Earl of Altamont, an ancestor of the present Marquess of Sligo. Plate engraved with the Royal Arms has not infrequently been described as Royal plate from the presence of the arms, but, as will be noticed in this dish, it was a general custom in the eighteenth century in England to add a touch of dignity to ambassadors' plate by engraving the Sovereign's arms and cipher upon it. The weight of Lord Howe's service was over 1,200 ounces, the weight of this dish being 40 oz. 9 dwt.